

announcement. Instructions for submittal of applications electronically will be established in the grant announcement. Late applications will be rejected.

§ 1709.212 Application review.

The Agency will review all applications to determine whether the applicant is eligible and whether the application is timely, complete and sufficiently responsive to the requirements set forth in the grant announcement to allow for an informed review. Failure to address any of the required evaluation criteria or to submit all required forms will disqualify the proposal. The Agency reserves the right to contact the applicant to clarify information contained in the proposal to resolve issues related to eligibility and the grant request. Applications that are timely, complete, and responsive will be forwarded for further evaluation. Applications that are late, incomplete, or non-responsive will be rejected.

§ 1709.213 Evaluation of applications.

(a) The Agency will establish one or more rating panels to review and rate the grant applications. The panels may include persons not employed by the Agency.

(b) The rating panel will evaluate and rate all complete applications that meet the eligibility requirements according to the evaluation and selection criteria and weights established in the grant announcement. Panel members may make recommendations for conditions on grant awards to promote successful performance of the grant or to assure compliance with other Federal requirements.

(c) After all proposals have been evaluated and scored, the proposals, the rankings, recommendations, and comments of the rating panel will be forwarded to the Administrator.

§ 1709.214 Administrator's review and selection of grant awards.

(a) The final decision to make a grant award is at the discretion of the Administrator. The Administrator shall consider the applications, the ranking, comments, and recommendations of the rating panel, and any other pertinent information before making a

decision about which, if any, applications to approve, the amount of funds awarded, and the order of approval. The Administrator reserves the right not to make any awards from the applications submitted. When the Administrator decides not to make any awards, the Administrator shall document in writing the reason for the decision.

(b) Decisions on grant awards will be made by the Administrator after consideration of the applications, the rankings and recommendations of the rating panel. The Administrator may elect to award less than the full amount of grant requested by an applicant.

(c) The applications selected by the Administrator will be funded in rank order to the extent of available funds.

§ 1709.215 Consideration of unfunded applications under later grant announcements.

The grant announcement may provide that all eligible but unfunded proposals submitted under preceding announcements may also be considered for funding. The announcement shall describe whether and how prior applicants may request reconsideration and supplement their application material.

§ 1709.216 Evaluation criteria and weights.

Unless supplemented in the grant announcement, the criteria listed in this section will be used to evaluate proposals submitted under this program. The total points available and the distribution of points to be awarded per criterion will be identified in the grant announcement.

(a) *Program Design.* Reviewers will consider the financial viability of the applicant's revolving fund program design, the proposed criteria for establishing eligible projects and borrowers, and how the program will improve the cost effectiveness of bulk fuel purchases in eligible areas. Programs demonstrating a strong design and the ability to improve cost effectiveness will receive more points than applications that are less detailed.

(b) *Assessment of needs.* Reviewers will award more points to programs that serve or give priority to assisting more